

MW 13:15-14:30
RR-302

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WHAT WE WILL DO AND HOW

This seminar was conceived as a place to do what its title promises: reflect about translation. Now, “translation” can be defined in many ways, some of them broad enough to include pretty much anything. Though I wouldn’t exclude any approach we might become interested in, I would try to keep things loosely focused by using as our starting point the way translation figures in the LAC curriculum. Absolutely essential to its existence, it’s hardly ever reflected upon; we tend to accept it as a neutral fact. When it attracts our attention at all, it’s because we think we’ve spotted an error or mistranslation. And even when we sense that there’s much more to it than this, there’s never time for closer scrutiny in class. Hence this seminar.

As a work in progress, the seminar will be shaped throughout by the participants’ interests, preferences, and suggestions. For this reason, the syllabus you’re reading is provisional. Things will change, probably quite a bit, in the course of the semester. Instead of a schedule, what you’ll find below is a list of suggested discussion topics. Please go through the list, think of what you’d most like to talk about, and feel free to add topics I’ve omitted. We’ll spend much of our first class finalizing the syllabus together, so come prepared! We’ll likely end up mixing theory and practice, as we alternate between general discussions sparked by a selection of short readings on a topic and sessions in which we look at specific translations, compare translated passages, attempt translation ourselves, play with translation chains, etc. This will allow us to look at the same or related issues from an enriching variety of different angles.

Prerequisites:

All you need is a love of and open-minded interest in language and literature, as well as curiosity about how they work. Familiarity with languages other than English would be nice but is not necessary; monolingual Anglophones won’t find themselves at a disadvantage.

Course requirements:

Active and committed participation in this collective endeavour is essential. It will include informal oral contributions, e.g. briefly introducing and/or leading discussions of theoretical or literary texts, preparing mini-reports on specific passages for dissection, etc. There will also be a longer formal presentation, which can (but needn’t) be related to your term project. Both the formal presentation and the term project itself can be shared with another student. For this project, you can choose a traditional research essay (15-20 pages) on whatever topic interests you, but you can also produce a translation of your own, accompanied by an introduction and commentary; creative work of other kinds is also a possibility. If you share the work with a friend, I will expect from each of you a 1-page account of your collaborative work. A detailed proposal (1 page or so plus a lightly annotated working bibliography) is due three weeks before the paper itself. There is no final exam, just a short (c. 2 pages) retrospective reflection on the seminar.

Readings:

There are no set texts. You will receive short readings for each class a week or so ahead of time.

Attendance policy:

Seminar attendance is mandatory. You are permitted 2 no-questions-asked absences. Each unexplained absence above and beyond this quota will reduce your final grade for the course.

Assignments and grading:

Participation	45%
	mini-introductions 5%
	transl. chain 10%
	transl. slam 10%
	consistent participation 20%
Formal presentation	10%
Term paper proposal	5%
Term paper	30%
Final reflection	10%

SELECTIVE LIST OF POSSIBLE TOPICS (in random order)**1. General**

Key concepts in the study of translation (e.g. fidelity, equivalence, units, universals, etc.)
 Translatability and its limits
 Metaphors of translation and translation as metaphor
 The contexts of translation
 Translation and literary systems
 Translation and ideology
 Translation and gender
 Translation and censorship – translation and decorum
 Translation and power/authority
 Translation and its market(s)

2. More specific

Pseudo-translation, self-translation, indirect translation
 Translating dialect, jargon, wordplay, titles, rhetorical devices, etc.
 Translating lyric poetry – narrative poetry
 Translating prose genres: fiction, drama, philosophy, children's literature, etc.
 Authors who were also translators (including Lucretius, Catullus, Chaucer, Milton, Diderot, Baudelaire, George Eliot, Dostoevsky, Nabokov ...)

3. Very specific

Translating the Bible – Homer – Plato – Sappho – Catullus – Virgil – Ovid – *Beowulf* – Dante – Boccaccio – Goethe – Flaubert – Baudelaire – Dostoevsky – Rilke
 Texts which foreground translation and/or translators (e.g. Cervantes's *Cide Hamete Benengeli*, Goethe's *Faust* translating the Gospel of John, Borges's *Pierre Menard*, etc.)

Or any other translation-related topic that captures your fancy! Just let me know.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES (daily topics beyond the first three weeks to be determined by the class)

Monday		Wednesday	
		Sept. 6	Introduction. Planning the semester.
Sept. 11	“Tasting menu”: sketching out frameworks for reflection.	Sept. 13	How translation is conceptualized. Translatability. Common dichotomies. “Fidelity” & co.
Sept. 18	Reading translations: Homer (1).	Sept. 20	Reading translations: Homer (2).
Sept. 25	Introducing translation in practice.	Sept. 27	TBD
Oct. 2	TBD	Oct. 4	TBD
Oct. 9	MID-TERM BREAK	Oct. 11	MID-TERM BREAK
Oct. 16	TBD	Oct. 18	TBD
Oct. 23	TBD	Oct. 25	TBD
Oct. 30	TBD	Nov. 1	TBD
Nov. 6	TBD	Nov. 8	TBD
Nov. 13	TBD	Nov. 15	TBD
Nov. 20	TBD	Nov. 22	TBD
Nov. 27	TBD	Nov. 29	TBD
Dec. 4	Wrapping up. Term paper & final reflection due.		

All ideas presented in your assignments, as well as the words used to express them, must be your own. All borrowings from external sources must be properly acknowledged, with full and accurate citation. Failure to do so constitutes **PLAGIARISM**, which is a serious academic offence: it is strictly prohibited and will result in serious academic sanctions. A professor who suspects a student has plagiarized an assignment is required to turn the matter over to the relevant authorities of the Faculty of Arts and Science. Students found guilty of plagiarism can receive a 0% for the assignment or a grade of “F” for the whole course; in especially serious cases, they can even be suspended or expelled from the university. Make sure that you are familiar with Concordia’s Academic Code of Conduct, as well as ways to avoid inadvertent plagiarism: <https://www.concordia.ca/conduct/academic-integrity/offences.html>.

The plagiarism ban includes the most recent **AI technologies**. The Liberal Arts College is committed to humanist education and to training critical and creative thinkers and writers. Accordingly, the use of artificial intelligence by students to generate text for any course assignment, in part, whole, draft or finished form, is strictly forbidden.

While tools such as Chat GPT, Bard, or any other text-generating AI technology might be integrated as educational tools by your course instructor in precisely defined contexts and towards specific pedagogical goals, such text-generating technologies may not be used in any way by students without explicit permission from the instructor. Unauthorized use will be considered plagiarism, with sanctions ranging from a failing grade to expulsion from the Liberal Arts program.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

Handbooks, Companions, Encyclopedias

The compendia listed below are all very good starting points for research. Many are no more than a few years old, which makes them good guides to both recent scholarship and still relevant older work.

N.B. The Concordia Library is very well stocked with books on translation. A number of titles listed below are also available online. The Library website will often give you the option to download and/or print either individual chapters or entire books, sometimes in a variety of formats.

- Baker, Mona, and Gabriela Saldanha, eds. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. 3rd ed. Routledge, 2020.
- Beer, Jeanette, M. A., ed. *A Companion to Medieval Translation*. Arc Humanities Press, 2019.
- Boase-Beier, Jean, Lina Fisher, and Hiroko Furukawa, eds. *The Palgrave Handbook of Literary Translation*. Palgrave Macmillan 2018.
- Class, Olive, ed. *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English*. 2 vols. Routledge, 2001.
- Gambier, Yves, and Luc Doorslaer, eds. *Handbook of Translation Studies*. Benjamins, 2010.
- Harding, Sue-Ann, and Ovidi Carbonell Cortés, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Culture*. Routledge, 2018.
- Kuhiwczak, Piotr and Karin Littau, eds. *A Companion to Translation Studies*. Multilingual Matters, 2007.
- Malmkjaer, Kristen, and Kevin Windle, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Millán, Carmen, and Francesca Bartrina, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies*. Routledge, 2017.
- Rawling, Piers, and Philip Wilson, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Philosophy*. Routledge, 2019.
- Washbourne, Kelly, and Ben van Wyke, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Literary Translation*. Routledge, 2019.

Anthologies

- Lefevere, André, ed. *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook*. London, 1992.)
An anthology of influential statements on translation from Cicero to the 1930s. Organized by topic: ideology, patronage, poetics, universe of discourse, technique, impact on the development of language and on education, central texts and cultures, etc.
- Robinson, Douglas, ed. *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche*. Very comprehensive; especially good coverage of pre-modern discussions, too often ignored by other translation scholars.
- Venuti, Lawrence, ed. *Translation Studies Reader*. 3rd ed. Routledge, 2012. Collects foundational texts in translation studies.
- Weissbort, Daniel, and Astradur Eysteinnsson, eds. *Translation – Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader*. Oxford, 2006. Similar to Lefevere and Robinson, but focused largely on the English tradition.

General and specialized monographs, article collections, etc.

- Barnstone, Willis. *The Poetics of Translation: History, Theory, Practice*. Yale University Press, 1993.
- Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*, 3rd ed. Routledge, 2002.
- _____, and André Lefevere, eds. *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*. Multilingual Matters, 1998.
- Bassnett, Susan, and Harish Trivedi, eds. *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. Routledge, 1999.
- Boase-Beier, Jean, Antoinette Fawcett, and Philip Wilson, eds. *Literary Translation: Redrawing the Boundaries*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Cheyfitz, Eric. *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan*. 1991. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.
- Eco, Umberto. *Experiences in Translation*. Transl. Alastair McEwen. University of Toronto Press, 2001.
- Epstein, B. J., and Robert Gillett, eds. *Queer in Translation*. Routledge, 2017.
- Hermans, Theo, ed. *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*. St. Martin's, 1985.
- Lefevere, André. *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. Routledge, 1992.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *On Translation*. Transl. Eileen Brennan. Routledge, 2006. [Original: *Sur la traduction*. Bayard, 2004.]
- Robinson, Douglas. *Transgender, Translation, Translingual Address*. Bloomsbury, 2019.
- Santaemilia, José, ed. *Gender, Sex, and Translation: The Manipulation of Identities*. St. Jerome, 2005.
- Simon, Sherry. *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. Routledge, 1996.
- _____. *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City*. McGill-Queens University Press, 2006.
- _____, and Paul St-Pierre, eds. *Changing the Terms: Translating in the Postcolonial Era*. University of Ottawa Press, 2000.
- Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. 2nd edition. Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Tymoczko, Maria, ed. *Translation, Resistance, Activism*. Amherst, 2010.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. Routledge, 2002.
- _____. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. 2nd ed. Routledge, 2008.
- Von Flotow, Luise, ed. *Translating Women*. University of Ottawa Press, 2011.
- _____. *Translating Women: Different Voices and New Horizons*. Routledge, 2017.
- _____. *Translation and Gender: Translating in the "Era of Feminism."* St. Jerome, 1997.

Bonus: a fun site to play with, whether you are a *Jane Eyre* fan or not
<https://prismaticjaneeyre.org>